

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Please amend claims 32 and 40 as indicated below.

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-14 (Cancelled)

Claim 15 (Previously presented): An isolated DNA encoding a protein having an amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 16 (Cancelled)

Claim 17 (Previously amended): An isolated DNA having the nucleotide sequence comprising nucleotides 49 to 3,183 of the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claim 18-24 (Cancelled)

Claim 25 (Original): An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of the DNA sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claim 26 (Cancelled)

Claim 27 (Previously amended): An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of the complete full length complement of the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claim 28-31 (Cancelled)

Claim 32 (Currently amended): A kit for distinguishing a differentiated chondrocyte from a dedifferentiated chondrocyte comprising one of the [~~nucleic acids of claims 15, 17, 25 and 27~~] DNAs of claims 15 and 17, or one of the nucleic acids of claims 25 and 27.

Claim 33-39 (Cancelled)

Claim 40 (Currently amended): An isolated DNA molecule which hybridizes under stringent conditions to nucleotides from position 49 through position 3,183 of ~~[with DNA having a nucleotide sequence ranging from the 49th to 3,183rd bases in the nucleotide sequence set forth in]~~ SEQ ID NO: 1, wherein the stringent conditions comprise a temperature in the range of that from the T_m of a hybrid of completely matching nucleic acids to a temperature 20°C lower than the T_m, and the DNA encodes a protein specifically expressed in differentiated chondrocytes.